

It is not a matter of surprise that these opinions should be entertained by all who have not received the results of this system. The same view was held, successively, of the lead mines of Michigan and Illinois, and of the lead mines of Wisconsin. As an additional reason, however, for the adoption of this system, it is alleged that the soil in many of the places is utterly barren, except for the mineral found therein, and that when that mineral is exhausted, the land is worth nothing. When the history of the past, with reference to this question, is considered, it will be found that there are few, if any, points of difference—that like causes have produced like effects in all that have been experienced on the Pacific, and that the same system is introduced there.

From the beginning the Government has manifested a desire to retain an interest in lands containing valuable minerals. This is a natural feeling in those who, dazzled by the supposed value of the treasure, patriotically desire that the Government should retain it. When, experience, however, shows that the cost of obtaining this share by the leasing system exceeds the benefits derived from it, and is attended by a long train of serious evils, that system should at once be abandoned.

The first action of the part of the Government in relation to this subject was the ordinance of 18th April, 1847, which gave one-third part of all gold, silver, lead and copper mines, was reserved to the United States. Here it will be perceived that it was not proposed to reserve or lease the land—the genius and spirit of the people would not have tolerated that system of leasing.

This ordinance provided that the lands should be sold, and that in accordance with a usage then in force in Europe, a portion of the valuable minerals therein should remain to the sovereignty.

The next was the joint Resolution of 10th of April, 1849, directing the employment of an agent to collect information relative to the copper mines of Lake Superior.

A report was made in accordance with this resolution, but no further action was had in relation to these mines, till after the treaty with the Chippewas of 10th October, 1849, by which that country was acquired. The third was the act of 3d March, 1850, authorizing the President to lease the Lead Mines in the Indian Territory.

Under these acts, the leasing system was adopted. Of the early operations of it we have but little information, as the mineral lands were placed under the control of the War Department in 1851, and prior to that time there was little if any thing done in it.

The first official information I have found is contained in the report of the Secretary of War, made on the 16th February, 1850, in which it is stated that the whole amount of rent received by the Government in 1841 and 1842, was 74,294 pounds, worth about \$1,600—a sum that would not more than pay the annual salary of one of the Superintendents employed in the service. By a subsequent report, it is stated that in 1843 and 1844, amounting to 242,814 pounds of lead, worth about \$1,850—while the amount expended on account of Mineral Lands by the Government, including salaries of officers, &c. during the same period, was \$29,729, making an actual loss to the Government by the operation of the leasing system, of \$27,879. It is also stated that the lands, which would have been sold at the ordinary minimum of \$1 25 per acre, and the expenses, costs, &c. that grew out of the vast number of suits instituted by the United States to recover rent due by defaulting lessees, to vacate fraudulent entries, &c. it would amount to a sum in comparison with the small amount received, could be considered as insignificant. Subsequently, in consequence of active measures having been taken by the District Attorney for that purpose, a greater amount of rent was received, but without any abatement of the attendant evils. So fully was Congress satisfied of the inexpediency of this system, with reference to revenue, and the actual loss that it entailed, that it was determined, in that of the 3d March, 1849, an act was passed, authorizing the President of the United States, to cause the valuable lead mines reserved in the State of Missouri, to be exposed to public sale, subject to the ordinary minimum. This was followed by the act of 11th July, 1849, directing the sale of the mineral lands in Wisconsin, and Iowa, to be sold, by the acts of 1st and 2d March, 1847, directing the sale of the valuable copper mines of Lake Superior, &c.—and finally by the act of 20th September, 1850, reducing their minimum price to that of ordinary public lands.

Thus it is seen that the whole of the leasing system, and the evils that grew out of it, and the results of their supposed value, after the experience of nearly fifty years, have been finally abolished, in some of the richest mineral regions on the face of the earth, and that, so far as exhibits have been made, it is shown to have been a loss to the Government directly to a considerable sum, and indirectly to a still greater amount.

It may be well to consider also the effect of this system upon the morals of the community in which it existed.

Having only a temporary connection with the soil, and that of a character calculated to stimulate every effort for their own private advantage, the lessees had no inducement to aid in sustaining the community, or in encouraging a proper moral tone in the community. Success in mining operations secured wealth, failure produced poverty, want, and their attendant evils. These motivations begot a spirit of wild speculation, and which in many cases, carried out to the fullest extent, and induced a feeling of indifference and apathy in the community. The Government was regarded as a rich landed monopolist, that had no feeling in unison with the interest of the tenant, but was rather striving to strip him of a part of the earnings of his toil and privations. Hence arose a feeling of resistance to the Government and its agents, and a disposition to evade the law, and the obligations of contracts by every possible expedient. Conscience of this kind of vassalage, the miners learned to look upon their Government with feelings of dissatisfaction and ill will, and to manifest these sentiments in bitter complaints and remonstrances.

This constant warring for wealth stimulated also feelings of cupidity, which were the cause of many of the evils that grew out of the leasing system, and which were not only to be avoided, whenever practicable, the payment of tribute, but also to encroach on the rights of each other.

Unceasing litigation was the consequence between the Government and miners, and among the miners themselves, either for the collection of rents, or to remedy some real or supposed wrong. The family quarrel was thus induced, by a mania for gain, extending to the individual and social relations, the whole producing a state of society that could only be realized by personal observation, but which was well known to exist to a greater or less extent in all the mining districts where the leasing system was in force.

Communities were kept in a state of turmoil, ferment, litigation, and bloodshed, by this odious system, and that these evils were thus caused is evident, from the fact that after the abrogation of that system, the same communities are as orderly, peaceful, and law abiding, as any people in the world.

The leasing system was also the cause of much irritation, jealousy and competition among the States within whose jurisdiction it was practiced. They justly complained that they were crippled in their resources by being restricted in the power of taxation; that the General Government, instead of selling the land, retained the fee, and stood in the attitude of a powerful and opulent landlord, holding a large portion of the population in an abject and servile tenancy, destroying all inducements to cultivation, or the making of permanent improvements or settlements upon the land, until Congress, seeing the accumulated evils and pernicious consequences, abolished, as before stated, the whole system.

It may be argued that in regions containing the precious metals, and where the lands in many cases, aside from the minerals, are useless, the same results would not be experienced. That it would be an unjustifiable disregard of the public interest to sell for any ordinary price, a tract of land containing a rich gold or quicksilver mine—while it would be equally unjust to individuals to charge them such price for lands that should prove wholly worthless.

The answer is, that this state of things existed in the Lake Superior regions, with the difference, that here the mineral is copper, while on the Pacific, it is gold, &c. The lands, however, in both regions aside from the minerals, are equally useless, yet those who were engaged in the Lake Superior operations, cheerfully purchased large bodies of worthless land, extending even to three miles square, at high rates, for the purpose of securing a good mining location; and the fact that the mineral on the Pacific is the more valuable, will only have a tendency to cause the greater efforts to defeat the Government in the collection of the tribute.

The further allegation may be made that in the

Lake Superior region mining could only be carried on profitably by companies, and at a very great outlay of capital and labor. By recent advances from California it appears that individual mining is declining, and that the mineral wealth of that country can only be successfully developed by combinations of capital and labor.

Further, from those who are inclined to think that those engaged in the mining operations there, do not probably realize as much as the same amount of employment realized in other branches of industry in that, or other sections of our Union; and that but comparatively few of the many thus engaged, acquire more than sufficient to pay expenses, or to enable them to return to the old States.

Such being the fact when all are left free and untrammelled to prosecute their labors, wholly unconstrained, as to time or place, and to enjoy the fruits of their toil, which would be the state of things if the country were swarming with officeholders, and the enterprising emigrant, after surmounting the most appalling difficulties, dangers, and hardships, should find himself subject to the dictation of agents of the Government, to direct his movements and require of him a share of the means acquired by trying efforts and herculean labor.

I therefore recommend that the lands in California be sold,—those that are agricultural in the ordinary way, and those that contain valuable minerals, in small lots, and subject at first to an increased minimum; that these mineral lands, after due public notice, be put up to the highest bidder, in quantities only to suit the demand, after such offering as they may remain unsold, to be subject to entry at an increased minimum.

And if it be the determination of Congress to secure a recompense for the valuable mineral contained in those lands that they provide by law, that all those minerals shall be assigned in California, by the United States, to a given ratio of the quantities only to suit the demand, after such offering as they may remain unsold, to be subject to entry at an increased minimum.

The business of this Office has been greatly increased by the general and special legislation of Congress, granting bounty lands, providing for the adjustment of private claims, making donations to the States for internal improvements.

Beside all this, we have in anticipation the arduous and immense labors incident to the management of the "private land claims," and of the "public lands," in our new acquisitions, which doubtless, to a greater or less extent, will be assigned to this Office by early legislation.

Notwithstanding these increased accumulations of duties, and those in prospect, it is not proposed, at this time, to ask any addition to the employees of this Office, as it is hoped that by an energetic and zealous application of our present force of clerks, and the assistance of the public business, it will be found adequate to the realization of the just expectations of the country.

The statistics alluded to in the foregoing, I beg leave to refer to the accompanying statements, in alphabetical order; and for the condition of the surveys, to the able reports herewith from the Surveyors General.

With great respect, your obedient servant,  
HENRY GRINNELL, Secy of the Interior.

## REPORT OF SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, Saturday, Nov. 30.  
SIR: In anticipation of the session of Congress, I respectfully submit the annual report of this department of the public service.

The vessels in commission during the past year, except those of the steamer Michigan, under the command of Commodore Bulfinch, which has been cruising on the lakes above Niagara, giving protection to our commerce, and rendering assistance to our distressed merchantmen on those inland seas, have been employed in six different squadrons.

The home squadron, Commodore Parker commanding, whose field of operations extends from the banks of Newfoundland to the mouth of the Amazon River, has comprised the frigates Raritan, Captain Page, the sloop-of-war Albany, Commander Randolph, the sloop-of-war Germantown, Commander Lowndes, the steamer Albatross, Lieutenant De Haven commanding, the schooner Pilot, Lieutenant Turner, and has been chiefly occupied in the West Indies and the Gulf of Mexico. The valuable services of the vessels of this squadron, together with the frigate Congress, in the capture of the schooner Albatross, in an attempted invasion of the Island of Cuba from the United States, and the mission of Commodore Morris, to intercede with the Spanish authorities of that island for the lives and liberation of our misguided sailors, and the capture of the schooner Albatross, and had been captured, were made known to Congress in a communication from the late President, in the month of June last. The frigate Raritan, being required for more distant service, was withdrawn from this squadron in the month of May, and after being refitted, was dispatched to the command of the Gulf of Mexico, to the South Pacific Ocean. The steamers Water Witch and Vixen standing in need of repairs, were brought for that purpose to the navy yard at Washington, and are expected soon to be again ready for sea. The sloop Germantown having been infected with yellow fever during her cruise in the West Indies, was taken to the navy yard at New York, and after being thoroughly cleansed and refitted, is preparing to join the squadron on the coast of Africa. The steamer Saranac, Capt. Tamm, has been lately added to this squadron, and bears the broad pennant of Commodore Parker.

The Pacific squadron, continued under the command of Commodore McKee, until the month of June last, when he was relieved and succeeded by Commodore McCauley. It consists of the frigate Savannah, Captain Page, bearing the broad pennant of the Commander of the squadron, the frigates Raritan, Capt. Gannt, the sloop Vandalia, Commander Gardner, Vincennes, Commander Hudson, Falmouth, Commander Pearson, St. Mary's, Commander Westcott, and the schooner Lexington, visiting the Marquesas and Friendly Islands, and making their depot of supplies at Valparaiso, while the residue of the squadron will be generally employed in that ocean north of the equator. The advantage, indeed the necessity of an efficient fleet in the Pacific for the protection of an extended territory and sudden and wonderful commotions in that quarter, is a self-evident fact, and cannot be too highly estimated, and will be again adverted to in the sequel of this communication.

The squadron on the coast of Brazil, Commodore McKee commanding, is composed of the frigate Congress, Captain McIntosh, bearing the broad pennant of the commander, the sloop St. Louis, Commander Bunker, and the schooner Relief, Lieutenant. The frigate Congress, which was recently relieved from the command of this station, is expected soon to arrive at the port of New York. The cruise of this squadron extending from the coast of Brazil to the Gulf of Mexico, and occasionally eastward to the coast of Africa, its attention has been especially directed to the suppression, by legitimate interposition, of the African slave trade, still carried on to a considerable extent between Brazil and the coast of Africa, to the protection of our neutral rights in the state of hostility lately existing between the Argentine Republic and the Banda Oriental of Uruguay, and the cultivation of relations of commerce and amity with the Governments and people of the several nations along the coast of its cruising ground.

The Mediterranean squadron, under the command of Commodore Morgan, consists of his flagship the Raritan, Independence, Capt. James, the frigates Congress, Capt. Lattin, the schooner Lexington, Lieutenant Mitchell. The course of political events in Europe not appearing to require the continuance of the large force, which had been assembled in that sea, in consequence of the unsettled aspect of affairs at the date of the last annual report from this Department, the frigate St. Lawrence, Captain Paulding, attached to this squadron, was ordered to proceed to the Mediterranean, and thence to return to the United States. She arrived at New York in the present month. The frigate Constitution, Captain Conner, also of this squadron, has been ordered home, and may be expected daily. Under

orders from the Department, Commodore Morgan, with his flagship Independence and the steamer Mississippi, visited Lisbon in the month of June and received on board our Chargé d'Affaires, on the occasion of his retirement from that post, and conveyed him to Naples. The squadron has been actively engaged in visiting the various ports of the Mediterranean, the Adriatic, and the Archipelago, and has maintained a discipline and efficiency highly commendable.

The squadron on the coast of Africa, under the command of Commodore Gregory, embraces his flagship, the sloop-of-war Portsmouth, Commander Peck, the sloop-of-war John Adams, Commander Powell, the sloop-of-war Dale, Commander Pearson, the brig Porpoise, Lieut. Lardner, and the brig Perry, Lieut. Foote. Orders were issued for the return of the sloop-of-war Yorktown, Commander Marston, lately attached to this squadron, but before their receipt she was wrecked on a coral reef on the northern extremity of the Island of Mayo, one of the Cape Verde. All the officers and crew were saved, and have been sent home in the sloop John Adams, which arrived at New York on the 11th inst. The vessel is a total loss. Under the vigilance and energy of the officers of this force the slave trade has been broken up on the west coast of Africa, but it still prevails on the south coast, in vessels bearing the flag of the United States, in spite of the efforts of our detached ships, which have been from time to time detached from the squadron to suppress it. Within the present year, the frigate Congress, the frigate Independence, and the sloop-of-war Portsmouth, captured as a prize on the latter coast by Lieut. Foote, in the brig Perry, for being concerned in the slave trade, has arrived in the port of Baltimore for trial.

Occasional instances have occurred of the interference of British cruisers with vessels bearing our flag on the coast of Africa, upon suspicion of their being slave ships, but in each case the offense has been stated for by explanations and apologies to our officers on that station, and the reports thereof have been transmitted from this Department to the Department of State.

The squadron in the East India and China seas, lately under the command of Commodore Geisinger, who returned home in the sloop St. Mary's, in June last, was transferred to the command of Commodore Voorhes, and consists of the sloop-of-war Plymouth, Commander Geisler, and the brig Dolphin, Lieut. Commanding Pease, having been recently detached from this service, in consequence of the illness of the latter on their passage to the United States. In the month of February last the Commander of this squadron took on board his flagship, the sloop-of-war Plymouth, at Macao, Mr. Ballester, who had been appointed a Commercial Agent of the United States, and carried him to Coochin China and other parts of Eastern Asia, and has since been engaged in our commercial relations among those distant and peculiar nations.

It is a source of high gratification that wherever our flag has been displayed by a national vessel, it has received the respect due to the national character, and that our interests and commerce in every sea have been secure and prosperous under its protection.

Under the joint resolution of Congress, approved May 2, 1850, "authorizing the President to accept and attach to the navy two vessels offered by Henry Grinnell, Esq. of New York, to be sent to the Arctic seas in search of the British Commander Sir John Franklin, and his companions," the vessels, the schooner Albatross, and the schooner Pilot, which were the friends of science and nautical adventure throughout the world, two originaries were received, and, by order of my predecessor, were placed under the command of Lieut. J. De Haven, with a sufficient crew of officers and men, nobly volunteered for that service. The command of one of the vessels, the schooner Pilot, was assigned to Lieut. S. P. Griffin, Lieut. De Haven commanding the other in person, and having the direction of the expedition. They sailed from New York in the month of May, and at the date of their last report to the Department, had advanced to the 75th degree of north latitude, and about the 50th degree of west longitude, gallantly contending with the icebergs of that region, and, notwithstanding the success in their hazardous but perilous enterprise.

In the active service of the officers of the Navy, it is proper to enumerate their labors on the Coast Survey, a work which, although committed to the direction of the Treasury Department, is in the most important part of its operations, mainly performed by them. During the last year, nine parties, eight in the Atlantic and one in the Pacific, each in charge of a Lieutenant in the Navy, accompanied by a competent force of midshipmen as assistants, have been actively engaged in this survey. Whether, in consideration of the work and the nature of the service, and the devotion to the duty, it would not be more appropriate and just, as well as economical, to assign it wholly to this branch of the service, is worthy the attentive consideration of the Legislature.

Having presented a hasty review of the service of our various squadrons during the past year, and designing to suggest some general considerations upon the naval policy required by the present interests of the country, I deem it needful to a full comprehension of the subject, very briefly to review our present Naval Establishment.

The vessels of the Navy of the United States consist of 31 ships of the line, 12 frigates, 21 sloops of war, 4 brig, 2 schooners, 15 steam frigates, 3 steamers of the first class, 3 steamers less than first class, 5 storeships.

Of these there are in commission, 1 frigate, 6 frigates, 15 sloops of war, 4 brig, 2 schooners, (Coast Survey), 1 steam frigate, 1 steamer of the first class, 3 steamers less than first class, 3 ships of the line, 1 receiving ship, 1 steamer do, 1 sloop do.

There are also on the stocks and in progress of construction, but the work thereon now suspended, four ships of the line and two frigates. To the foregoing may be added a contingent naval force of vessels owned by individuals, and built by contract for the Government and employed in the transportation of the mail, and liable in any emergency to be taken at valuation and converted into vessels of war, namely: Four steamers of the first class employed on the line between New York and Liverpool. A fifth is contracted for, but not yet completed. The steamer of the first class between New York and Panama, and a second steamer on this line has been brought into use, and has not been finished so as to undergo inspection and be received. The contract on this line, as on that to Liverpool, provides for five steamships.

To supply the demands of the service in the construction, equipment, and repair of vessels, and of the stores, a naval yard was established at Portsmouth, New Hampshire; 2, Charleston, Massachusetts; 3, Brooklyn, New York; 4, Philadelphia; 5, Washington; 6, Norfolk; 7, Pensacola; 8, Memphis.

Permanent stone docks have been many years since erected at the yards at Charleston, Norfolk, and Philadelphia, and at the latter place a floating balance dock with stone basins and railways are expected to be completed for use at Portsmouth and Pensacola in the course of the ensuing year, and a floating sectional dock, also with a stone basin and railway, at Philadelphia within the same period. If these three docks shall realize the expectations of the Government, they, with the dry dock facilities in this respect threefold within the next twelve months, and will have provided all the accommodation of that kind which may be required on the waters of the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico for many years to come. The navy yard at Washington carries on a highly important manufactory of ordnance and other articles of iron, and preparations are in progress to erect there machinery for rolling copper, an establishment long wanted, as well on the score of economy as to furnish a better quality of rolled copper for sheathing vessels than can be obtained in market. The yard at Philadelphia is engaged in the construction of the manufacture of cordage and other supplies of hempen materials for naval uses, and its operations may be enlarged with the necessities of the service. I have regretted to learn that there has been some loss in the expenditure there, in consequence of the difficulty of obtaining a firm foundation for the buildings, and it is in contemplation to have a new building erected by the Government, and that for that purpose, in accordance with the recommendation of the Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, to provide against the loss of the future.

In conformity with the act of the last session authorizing the construction of a sectional or floating dry-dock basin and railway on the coast of the Pacific, I have directed the Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, to provide against the loss of the future. In conformity with the act of the last session authorizing the construction of a sectional or floating dry-dock basin and railway on the coast of the Pacific, I have directed the Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, to provide against the loss of the future. In conformity with the act of the last session authorizing the construction of a sectional or floating dry-dock basin and railway on the coast of the Pacific, I have directed the Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, to provide against the loss of the future. 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